

Illinois Early Learning Council

February 25, 2013
11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Roosevelt University
425 S. Wabash Ave.
Room 418
Chicago, IL 60605
Conference Line: 888-494-4032
Access Code: 7198518485

Meeting Minutes

Members participating: Lori Baas, Karen Berman, Jeanna Capito, Tim Carpenter, George Davis, Andrea Densham, Daniel Fitzgerald, Jana Fleming, Gaylord Gieseke, Phyllis Glink, Vinni Hall, Gloria Harris, Daniel Harris, Ava Harston, Harriette Herrera, Colleen Jones, Teresa Kelly, Camille Lilly, Suzanne Logan, Janet Maruna, Beth Mascitti-Miller, Mark McHugh, Debbie Meisner-Bertauski, Harriet Meyer, Janice Moenster, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Beatrice Nichols, Donna Nylander, Andrea Palmer, Claudia Quigg, Barbara Quinn, Diana Rauner, Elliot Regenstein, Pam Reising Rechner, Vanessa Rich, Gina Ruther, Michelle Saddler, Jodi Scott, Byrnn Seibert, Sara Slaughter, Julie Smith, Luz Maria Solis, Teri Talan, Kathleen Villano, Joan Vitale, Judith Walker-Kendrick, Maria Whelan, Granada Williams, Kay Willmoth Cass Wolfe, Cindy Zumwalt

I. **Welcome and Announcements**

a. **Introductions**

Holly Stadler, Dean of Roosevelt University's College of Education, welcomed participants and highlighted Roosevelt University's education innovations.

Co-Chair Julie Smith encouraged members to share their opinions and give good feedback in this meeting. She also noted that updates are now in written form and will no longer be taking a large part of the agenda.

b. **Approval of October Meeting Minutes**

Minutes for the October 22, 2012 Council meeting were approved.

c. **Announcements**

Elliot Regenstein provided an update on President Obama's mentioning of Early Learning in the State of the Union, noting that only broad outlines exist at this point. Lots more detail is coming and no one has closed the door on this on either side of the aisle. It will be at least a calendar year before and money becomes available to the states.

Julie Smith noted that Illinois officially won round two of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge and that the Governor announced the recipients of the Early Childhood Construction Grants in December.

Julie Smith and Harriet Meyer led a recognition of Nancy Shier’s contributions to the Council and to early learning throughout Illinois. Nancy was presented with a commendation certificate from the Governor. Julie said “One of the first people I met when I started was Nancy Shier. I could tell right away that the whole community was blessed by having her as one of its strongest advocates.” Nancy received a standing ovation.

II. ELC Big Picture Presentation

Theresa Hawley presented on the Early Learning Council’s “big picture,” focusing on its goals, alignment with partner entities and necessary next steps (the presentation slides are available on the ELC page of the OECD website). She noted that the data systems being developed will be as longitudinal as possible. Members expressed the desire that a continued, explicit statement of the need for proper funding levels be part of the Council’s “big picture.”

III. Early Childhood Action Partnerships Presentation

Mike Shaver and Jay Young from Children’s Home + Aid and Kathy Stohr of Illinois Action for Children presented on their experiences and lessons learned regarding community systems building.

Mike Shaver: We wanted to test the idea of “collective impact” and saw progress in bringing stakeholders to the table using this model in the Southside Early Learning Network. We felt that not having a collective view was a challenge we needed to address.

Four keys: 1) Common Agenda 2) Shared Measurement 3) Mutually Reinforcing Activities 4) Continual Communication. The South Side Early Learning Network has had some successes and challenges around #3 – mutually reinforcing activities. It is essential to think about segmentation and work across silos. We found that it was tough to braid existing services because funding streams are different. We’re also wrestling with sustainability and growth issues.

Jay Young: We’ve been modestly successful in terms of the “seamless integration” required by MIECHV. We had 82 representatives from 75 agencies and many parents present. We learned that we can’t do this work without bringing a degree of cohesion to it (gun violence, parental engagement and many other issues are very related). You also need quick, easy victories.

Kathy Stohr: In managing the ECAP program we’ve learned some lessons, but bear in mind that these are all observational and anecdotal. Mini grants have sparked interest in building collaborations across the state. One drawback is that sometimes

the money becomes the reason for the project (rather than the mission being the reason). We're starting to change conversations from "programs" to "systems". The whole process is great for network building. Having a process/framework is very helpful for communities that are just starting out. Parent-to-parent connections are essential. We also need to have parents at the table and have effective ways to get information out to parents. My four biggest takeaways:

1. Local leadership matters
2. Design support systems to give a better picture of goals/path
3. Money is not what stops communities from collaborating
4. Beware the "frozen middle" – the key to any change is in the middle of an organization, no matter how great the ideas at the top.

IV. State of Early Childhood in Illinois

Theresa Hawley presented maps and data that she developed with IECAM (available on the ELC page of the OECD website). They outlined the number of children broken down by location, income level, race, family employment pattern and service enrollment.

V. Committee Recommendations

- A. Family and Community Engagement Recommendation: *Recommendation to Governor Quinn to support Illinois' expansion of early childhood facilities in high-need communities in his FY14 capital budget.*
The recommendation passed.
- B. Systems Integration and Alignment Recommendation: *Recommendation for changes to Rule 407 and its procedures related to obesity prevention (nutrition, physical activity and screen-time standards) for consideration by DCFS.*
The recommendation passed.
- C. Quality Ratings and Improvement System: *Levels 1-4 and the Cultural and Linguistic, Infant and Toddler, and Preschool Instructional Excellence Awards.*
The recommendation passed.

VI. Adjourn

Next Meeting is June 24, 2013